

Wien, C.A., ed. 2008. *Emergent Curriculum in the Primary Classroom: Interpreting the Reggio Emilia Approach in Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press. 192 pp. ISBN 9780807748879. \$26.95. [An NAEYC Comprehensive Member Benefit in July/August 2008]

Even with the tight curriculum constraints and accountability pressures that schools face today, public school classroom teachers can successfully implement emergent curriculum. Wien outlines the key values and components of emergent curriculum. She gives practical suggestions to help teachers and schools create classroom environments and construct new relationships between teachers and children and the curriculum that inspire learning.

These ideas are brought to life by seven teachers and three administrators who were motivated by the ideas of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education to rethink their teaching practices. They describe how they implemented short- and long-term emergent curriculum projects in a range of subject areas in kindergarten through third grade classrooms. They demonstrate how to help children take ownership of their learning through opportunities to represent and revise their thinking via a range of creative materials and dialogue between children and teachers.

The book shows how emergent curriculum is centered in children's and teachers' questions and interests and how it blossoms into serious inquiry when teachers participate as colearners with the children to open up new possibilities for learning. The teachers offer insight into the challenges and successes as the projects unfold and they begin to see their roles as teachers differently. These reflections, samples of the children's work, and Wien's analysis of each project offer unique insights into a curriculum approach that generates high levels of engagement and learning.

Edwards, C., & C. Rinaldi, eds. 2008. *The Diary of Laura: Perspectives on the Reggio Educational Diary*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. 140 pp. ISBN 9781933653525. \$24.95.

The editors Edwards and Rinaldi discuss the concept of educational diaries, a documentation process developed in the infant/toddler centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The book explores the ways a diary can contribute to the professional development of infant/toddler and preschool teachers. At Reggio Emilia infant/toddler centers, teachers compile a diary for each child and give it to the family at the end as a memory of the child's life at the center. Simple, poignant narratives and timely photographs capture each child's unique way of developing—through relationships with adults and other children and encounters with objects in her classroom and her surroundings. Rinaldi traces the meaning and history of Reggio Emilia diaries and how they have emerged as a form of pedagogical documentation.

At the heart of this book is an original diary from Reggio Emilia about an 11-month-old infant, Laura, during her first few months at the center. International early childhood educators with longtime connections to Reggio schools contribute their reflections about that diary's impact on professional conversations about important early education issues when the diary was presented at recent professional conferences. Their essays discuss the implications of using *The Diary of Laura* for enhancing teacher education and informing the practice of early childhood education. Edwards offers specific strategies for using the diary as a professional development tool in workshops with students and teachers.

Gonzalez-Mena, J., & A. Stonehouse. 2008. *Making Links: A Collaborative Approach to Planning and Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. New York: Teachers College Press. 208 pp. ISBN 9780807748435. \$35.95.

Two early childhood experts team up to present their vision of what goes into making a successful program for children birth to age 5. Their approach focuses on knowing children and the contexts in which they live and translating that knowledge into practice. Teachers base program plans on children's interests, skills, and learning rather than choosing the day's activities around the teacher's curricular themes.

The authors identify 26 areas of knowledge that practitioners need to guide their work, whether in center-based programs or family child care. The alphabetized topics begin with *attachment behaviors*, continue through *exploration needs* and *yearnings* (knowing what children and families feel passionate about), and end with the *zone of proximal development* (children learning by trying things they can't do quite yet on their own but can do with the support of the teacher). Brief explanations two to three pages long introduce each concept, followed by implications for practice. The book is especially appropriate for newcomers to the early childhood field and for students enrolled in introductory early childhood education courses.

Pianta, R.C., K.M. La Paro, & B.K. Hamre. 2008. *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual: Pre-K*. 120 pp. ISBN 9781557669414. Baltimore, MD: Brookes; *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual: K-3*. 128 pp. ISBN 9781557669421. Each \$49.95.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a validated and standardized observation tool to assess the quality of interactions between teachers and children. It measures instructional and social-emotional interactions that researchers have found contribute to academic achievement and social competence in the early childhood years. This tool addresses three domains of teacher-student interaction: the degree to which teachers support social and emotional functioning; classroom processes related to management of student behavior, time, and attention in class; and teaching interactions that promote cognitive and language development.

CLASS has been used successfully by researchers to document quality and has a wide variety of other applications. Administrators and policy makers can use CLASS for program evaluation and improvement or for accountability purposes. Teacher educators and in-service trainers can use it to highlight effective teaching practices or to measure the degree to which their teacher education classes are preparing early childhood education students to meet the challenges of teaching. Teachers can use CLASS to reflect on their own practices. An easy-to-use Web site (<http://classobservation.com>) provides further details and video examples of real classroom interactions.

### Correction

The review of *The Outdoor Playspace Naturally for Children Birth to Five Years* (New Books, March 2008) provided an inaccurate Web address for the U.S. distributor, The Olive Press. The correct URL is [www.olivepressbooks.com](http://www.olivepressbooks.com).

Titles are selected from the many new books received by NAEYC. Educator **Gail Perry** writes the brief annotations. The books are available from the publishers listed, your local bookstore, or online retailers.

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